



Our side of the story...

An opinion piece from Stewart Shanley, Earth Animal's Chief Executive Officer – October 20, 2020

Those who know me well would consider me very much an 'inside out' CEO. A leader who is much more comfortable working internally with our people, challenging us to be the best we can and making sure we have clarity on where we are going, coupled with an unwavering drive for continuous improvement. Correspondingly, I maybe do not spend as much time as I should externally, engaging with media and communicating our promise to the market.

However, as a result of the events of the last week, I have been moved to take a stance on behalf of Earth Animal in an attempt to set the records straight.

Early last week, Earth Animal was served with a complaint seeking to pursue a class action lawsuit, by an individual who has been trying unsuccessfully for 3 years to allege that our No-Hide® products are not what they say they are. Over these past few years, our accuser, and a small handful of other 'consumer advocates,' have tried all manner of PR, so-called 'scientific' study publication, governmental and now legal based techniques, in an attempt to undermine Earth Animal and try to expose a version of our products that simply does not exist.

This latest attempt through the courts using legal counsel, which presumably earns its fees only when it wins, has also been accompanied by a very carefully orchestrated PR activation, which means that the real jury – Earth Animal's customers – will preside over the topic on social media long before it ever reaches the courts.

In general, I believe that consumer advocacy groups are a good thing. When they work well, they complement the commercial and federal dynamics of any sector and raise standards so that an industry moves forward on a proper path. The point here is that these advocate groups, and the individuals within them, also have a duty to behave responsibly, to do their reasonable research, and to choose to search for and embrace the truth, rather than merely drafting and republicizing already disproven headline grabbing revelations. This is particularly important in today's world because, with so much false reporting, it can be difficult to separate fact from fiction.

In the light of the false reporting, I guess your question remains, "Are we the bad guys?". We have already put our side of the story on No-Hide® into the media repeatedly over the past years in order to prove that there is absolutely no truth in the allegation that there is raw hide in our No-Hide® products. I won't repeat these again here, but at the bottom of this opinion piece there are links which clarify our position on the topic for those who have not seen them. Instead, let me tell you a little about the Earth Animal family:

Earth Animal was founded by a veterinarian, Dr. Bob Goldstein, and his wife Susan who have advocated holistic animal care for over 40 years. This couple, who anyone who knows them will vouch for, have dedicated their careers to developing wellness and longevity solutions for all animals.

Earth Animal dedicates 1% of its annual net sales to industry stewardship initiatives and mission-driven efforts which work to preserve and enhance quality of life for all. The organizations Earth Animal partners with are many, but the Catherine Violet Hubbard Foundation, The Farm Sanctuary, and the CT Food Bank, in our own state of Connecticut, are long standing associations which we are particularly proud of.



what goes around comes around.

That's why we dedicate 1% of annual net sales to organizations, industry stewardship, and mission-driven efforts that preserve and enhance quality of life for animals, people, and the Earth.

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We also work hand in glove with the Pet Sustainability Coalition on supporting their agenda. Earth Animal's Chief Marketing Officer serves on their board and, in my view, this dynamic and progressive organization has done more in driving transparency, challenging companies to improve, and ensuring continued progress in our industry than any consumer advocacy group I can think of.

We have just spent 3 years building a new state-of-the-art facility in Maryland to expand the production of our products. We made this investment, because we believe that families with animals deserve better than the alternative over cooked and highly processed food made with poor quality ingredients and by-products, that is the root cause of many of the ailments that plague our domesticated animals.

Earth Animal is also heavily invested in partnerships in the space of research and development into alternative proteins and, although our products at present rely heavily on the use of animal agriculture, we are committed to a future where this is less and less the case, not just in the pursuit of improving the plight of the animals used in industrial agriculture, but for the plight of the planet itself.

Anyone close to Earth Animal will know that we also recently launched a pilot of our "Flex Forward" program, an initiative where Earth Animal has essentially pledged that it will commit to pay for the recycling and upcycling of all plastic pet food & treats bags used in the pet industry...yes, not just our own, but the plastic bags used by our competitors too.

Mid pandemic we (in partnership with Pet Food Experts) paid for, analyzed, and then shared, for free, a piece of consumer research designed to help all brands and retailers understand what was important to the consumer in these uncertain times, so that we were all better equipped to successfully navigate through this period.

These are merely some of the examples of initiatives we engage in simply because we believe they are the *right* things to do.

In the matter at hand, we have been untruthfully accused of putting raw hide in our No-Hide®. These allegations, which have been repeatedly disproven, ignore the fact that No-Hide® was invented by the founders of Earth Animal because they strongly disapproved of the use of raw hide as an occupational chew. This is because raw hide is a by-product of the leather industry, riddled with formaldehydes and bleaches, and not even a food. That's why, 5 years ago, the founders of Earth Animal set out to create a product that has now been embraced by the treat industry -- a treat which is occupationally long and which contains ingredients that make it healthier for the animal. Since No-Hide® was made available for consumers, we have strived to refine the science underlying our products and have continuously worked to improve product performance.

In addition, we continue to spend a significant proportion of our marketing monies on a company artefact called "Chew School," which is an initiative designed to educate families with animals on the importance of choosing the right chew for their animal, as well as the importance of supervision to ensure a safe chewing experience. This, in our view, is a much-needed public service initiative and we now, in fact, carry a version of this information on all of our No-Hide® packaging.



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We intend to engage with the plaintiff directly and amicably, to see if there is anything more we can do to demonstrate that our No-Hide® products are made from ingredients that do not contain raw hide. We would do the same for anyone who is genuinely interested in learning more about our company's beliefs and the products we create. It also goes without saying that, if we are not successful in this regard, we intend to defend the integrity of Earth Animal vigorously and in every way until the matter is concluded.

To close, I would just ask that you consider 2 things:

1. On reading this, does Earth Animal *sound* like a company that would squander a 40- year tradition of creating high quality solutions by developing a "No-Hide" platform based on deliberately misleading and lying to our valuable trade and customer stakeholders? I think not.
2. If you think there is any truth in my words, can I ask that you please share this opinion piece with your networks. They say fake news can spread 6 times faster than the truth, so we would appreciate your assistance in helping us, once again, set the record straight.

Thanks for your time and consideration

Stewart

Stewart Shanley
CEO Earth Animal

Links to information on No-Hide® below:

PA Department of Agriculture Report: [PDA No-Hide Investigation Results](#)

FDA Report: [FDA No-Hide Investigation Results](#)

No Hiding the Truth on No-Hide® Chews: [Earth Animal No-Hiding the Truth on No-Hide Chews](#)



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